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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, as we continue to mourn the carnage which happened at Virginia Tech and the flags fly half-mast, give us the determination to bring good from evil and sanity from insanity. May this horrific shooting prompt us to humble ourselves and pray and seek Your face and turn from wickedness. Permit our pain and anguish to force us to examine what contributions we may be making in romanticizing a culture of violence. May the shooting in Blacksburg, VA, keep us alert to the battle we fight against principalities, powers, and evil in our world.

Use our Senators today as agents of reconciliation as they remember that in everything, You are working for the good of those who love You. Hear our prayer, forgive our sins, and heal our land. We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, April 17, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The first half of morning business is controlled by the Republican leader or his designee or designees and the last portion controlled by the majority. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 372, the Intelligence authorization bill.

Yesterday, it was unfortunate that the Senate did not invoke cloture on the intelligence legislation. However, I did enter a motion to reconsider the failed cloture vote. We will have that vote again at some time.

Also today, at 12:30 p.m., the Senate will recess for the party conferences. We have no votes scheduled today because of the inability to move forward on the very important intelligence authorization as a result of the Republicans in unison voting against our ability to go forward. If there is no change in that, we made a couple of proposals yesterday which were all objected to, as to being able to move forward on germane amendments, relevant amendments.

We will have a cloture vote on another issue that it appears at this time the Republicans are going to block; that is, the ability for Medicare to negotiate for lower priced prescription drugs.

We are going to continue to move forward on our desire to allow the intelligence community, the 16 agencies that work for the Federal Government, working in espionage and other such important issues, to allow them to have legislation that brings us up to date. For the last 2 years, there has been no legislation in that regard because the Republicans did not move forward. We are going to continue to try to move forward even though the Vice President does not want this legislation.

We also are going to continue to speak for the American people in allowing Medicare—one of the most important programs ever developed by this country has been Medicare. I can remember my first elected job on the board of trustees of then Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital, the largest hospital district in the State of Nevada at the time. When I took that job, 45 percent of those people who were senior citizens who came to that hospital had no insurance, and children, spouses, friends, and neighbors had to agree to pay their hospital bill or they would not be taken care of.

The situation now is that virtually every senior citizen, as a result of Medicare having passed—that passed during my term of office on the board of trustees—virtually every senior citizen now has the ability to be taken care of, except Medicare cannot now negotiate for lower priced prescription drugs. The insurance industry can, the Veterans' Administration can, HMOs can, but not Medicare.

We are going to continue to try to move forward on that issue even though the Republicans obviously are being led down the wrong path by the pharmaceutical industry and the insurance industry and HMOs. We are going

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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